



APLAC

Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation

ASIA PACIFIC LABORATORY ACCREDITATION COOPERATION

MUTUAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT

PREAMBLE

The Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC) is an organisation of laboratory accreditation bodies in the Asia Pacific Region, formalised with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in April 1995, among 20 accreditation bodies.

APLAC is one of the Specialist Regional Bodies supporting the trade facilitation activities of the APEC* Subcommittee on Standards and Conformance (SCSC).

This document describes the elements of a Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) as a means by which the signatories can more formally recognise one another's accredited laboratories. Signatories to the MOU have expressed a desire to cooperate so as to generally improve standards of testing and calibration in the economies of the region and to enhance the free trade objectives of the region and between the region and economies elsewhere.

This MRA does not supersede other recognitions required by laws and regulations in the economies of the signatory bodies.

PRINCIPAL ELEMENTS OF MUTUAL CONFIDENCE

The principal elements of the APLAC (MRA) meant to establish confidence among the participating systems are listed below. These elements are designed to ensure conformance with the requirements in order to build up and maintain mutual confidence in the technical competence of APLAC members and their accredited laboratories. The elements are:

- 1 Exchange of information on the development and operation of APLAC member laboratory accreditation bodies.
- 2 Participation in the APLAC General Assembly.
- 3 Participation in international interlaboratory comparisons and proficiency testing programs on at least an annual basis.

- 4 Participation in meetings of APLAC technical committees to discuss problems related to testing and calibration in various technical fields.
- 5 Assessment of applicants to this Arrangement is in the form of visits by teams of assessors constituted in accordance with and operating to the provisions of the document, APLAC MR001, *Procedures for Establishing and Maintaining Mutual Recognition Arrangements Between Laboratory Accreditation Bodies* to determine if the applicant meets the requirements of ISO/IEC Guide 58, *Calibration and testing laboratory accreditation systems -- General requirements for operation and recognition*.
- 6 Assessment of signatories to the Arrangement take place at intervals of approximately four years for the purpose of assuring that the signatory bodies continue to meet the requirements of ISO/IEC Guide 58.
- 7 Observation of applicant bodies' assessments of their laboratories to determine if these laboratories meet the requirements of ISO/IEC Guide 25, *General requirements for the competence of calibration and testing laboratories*.
- 8 Application, assessment, decisions, and maintenance pertaining to the MRA are conducted in accordance with the APLAC MR001 Procedure or its equivalent.
- 9 Appropriate information developed during assessment of applicants and periodic evaluation of signatories is shared among the signatories on a confidential basis.
- 10 Confidence in the national measurement institutes to which traceability is claimed by accredited laboratories and support for the measurement comparison activities of BIPM* and regional metrology organisations.

* Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation

* Bureau International des Poids et Mesures

ARRANGEMENT

Upon fulfilling the requirements described in the Principal Elements of Mutual Confidence described above, each signatory to the APLAC MRA enters into the following Arrangement:

- 1 The APLAC MRA Signatories for Testing and Calibration:
 - (i) use equivalent procedures in the accreditation of laboratories under ISO/IEC Guides 58 and 25;
 - (ii) recognise the test reports and calibration certificates issued by their accredited testing and calibration laboratories as being technically equivalent;
 - (iii) promote the acceptance by users in their economies of test reports and calibration certificates issued by their accredited testing and calibration laboratories;
 - (iv) investigate complaints resulting from test reports and calibration certificates issued by their accredited testing and calibration laboratories; and
 - (v) inform one another, as soon as possible, of any significant changes that have occurred or will occur in the status and/or operational practices in their accreditation body.
- 2 The addition of new signatories to the APLAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement or the withdrawal of an APLAC Signatory will not change the terms of this Arrangement.
- 3 The conclusion of a further Arrangement between APLAC and a Recognised Laboratory Accreditation Body not participating in APLAC, or between APLAC and another regional association of laboratory accreditation bodies, does not change the terms of this Arrangement. The assessment information may be shared with these bodies only with the agreement of the assessed laboratory accreditation body.
- 4 This Arrangement will be null and void if the Memorandum of Understanding referred to in the preamble is terminated.
- 5 This Arrangement may be amended at any time by agreement in writing among the signatories.
- 6 In the event of a dispute between signatories to this Arrangement or with Applicants concerning elements, objectives, procedures, and requirements, the matter will be referred to the APLAC General Assembly.
- 7 This Arrangement will come into effect for each participant upon signature of the affected parties.
- 8 This Arrangement by itself does not provide any recognition or accreditation under any law or regulation in the economy of any signatory body. However, the signatories intend to promote to their governments the use of this Arrangement in support of recognition arrangements in the regulated sector.

MEMBER, APLAC MUTUAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT

S I G N A T O R I E S

We, the undersigned, endorse the terms of the APLAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement and undertake, to the best of our ability, fulfilment of its objectives.

Testing and Calibration

Organisation: NATA
Economy: Australia
Authorised Representative: John A Gilmour

Organisation: A2LA
Economy: United States of America
Authorised Representative: Peter S Unger

Organisation: HOKLAS
Economy: Hong Kong, China
Authorised Representative: Dr Lay Har Ng

Organisation: NVLAP
Economy: United States of America
Authorised Representative: Raymond G Kammer, Director, National Institute of Standards & Technology

Organisation: IANZ
Economy: New Zealand
Authorised Representative: Dr W L Richards

Testing

Organisation: JAB
Economy: Japan
Authorised Representative: Dr T Ohtsubo

Organisation: SAC-SINGLAS
Economy: Singapore
Authorised Representative: Dr Jimmy Chen

Organisation: JNLA
Economy: Japan
Authorised Representative: Juichi Nagano

Organisation: CNLA
Economy: Chinese Taipei
Authorised Representative: Chen, Ming-Bang

Organisation: KOLAS
Economy: Korea
Authorised Representative: Seung-Bae Lee

Chairman, APLAC MRA Council:

John W Locke

Date

Chairman, APLAC:

John A Gilmour

Date